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ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD: SHEWING THAT IT IS CONTRARY TO NATURE.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,

IMRESSED with an idea that the subject is of the highest importance, and a conviction of mind, that, through the medium of your publication, the promotion of religious truth is greatly facilitated, I obtrude myself on your notice: without apology, and without preface, I humbly solicit the favour of having the following observations inserted in your repository.

Previous, however, to propounding any question of my own, I intend to notice an article which appeared in your last number (page 540), under the signature of T.; for therein an attempt is made to support a doctrine which I verily do not believe; namely, that there are occurrences in nature which support the belief in a future state of existence.

This writer chooses to commence his observations, by an attack upon a set of people whom he calls Deists. He notices first their presumptive claims to reason, and then declares that "they of all men in religious matters, shew the least exercise of reason, and exhibit the most immature judgment." This may be true; but, strange to relate, in his attempt to prove that "the resurrection of Jesus was not unnatural; and that a new creation, arising out of an old one is accordant with nature," he employs the very same trite and futile arguments, which many of these people have, at various times, made use of, in their attempts to establish at the same time, a scheme to support the idea of a future life and dispense with Christianity. But to attend to some of his observations:—

"I know not (says he) by what power I write these lines, or think these thoughts." Probably he may not; he may not know by what power animals of the brute creation think, or determine to stretch out their limbs, and do it; he may not be able to discover the immediate cause of this action is matter; but he may convince himself that it is an harmonious combination of its principles, and the action produced by this combination that gives both to him and them the powers that

each respectively possesses. "What particular part of me (he asks) must I preserve to retain my consciousness, when all other parts are destroyed?" This is a curious question; but he in some measure answers it, when he tells us what parts we may dispense with, and still retain life and consciousness; that life seems to exist in the organization, and though not dependent on the entire of organization, it is on its primary parts. He goes on, "If this is the case, there is not occasion to preserve this body to preserve conscious identity;" and, after speaking of the changes which man may possibly undergo, he says, "All this demonstrates that flesh and blood are distinct from conscious identity." What does he mean by this? Does he mean to say that man in his present state possesses an immaterial and immortal spirit? does he mean to say, that all his powers, whether of the body or mind, have not their origin in matter, and that they are not absolutely dependent upon it? If he does, I give it as my opinion that his conclusions are false, and humbly invite to adduce any thing that will prove the contrary.

The untaught hewer of wood knows, of trees or plants, that the seat of life lies not in their remote branches; that a tree may have any or the principal part of its branches taken off, and it will continue to grow with increased vigor; but if by any means the primary part is injured, then in proportion to the injury sustained so will the health be affected, and the growth impeded. Similarly so the case is with man. A person of a strong constitution may have all his limbs amputated; his external parts may be so mutilated that no one can recognize him, and yet the emporium of life remains the same: but should his vital parts be injured (I will not insult the reader's understanding by telling him what constitutes these parts), then will the health of his body and the vigor of his mind be affected, whether organization is entire or not.

Again, should any very serious accident happen to the brain (and this is only flesh and blood), conscious identity is immediately suspended. All his thoughts are extravagant dreams—the workings of a disordered imagination; he knows not who he is, or what he is; where he has been, or what he has done; whether he has lived a day only, or existed a thousand years.

Speaking of vegetation, he says, "the grasses shoot out to maturity and die; from new roots, &c. they rise again (not the withered grasses of course) in annual verdure. The organic plant was put into the ground; it is dead, &c. but it has left in its place a new root, which produces a similar flower." Very true; but what has all this to do with the resurrection of the dead, or what analogy does it bear to the re-animation of Christ's dead body? It is true there is exhibited a succession

of the same things, and in that succession there is similarity; but there is no identity: the offspring plant no more possesses the identity of its parent, than I am the identical person of my father. "The tulip, &c. (continues he) bear their testimony to the possibility of a resurrection of apparent identity from a notoriously dead plant." It is my opinion they bear no such testimony. The means of succession is produced **BY** the plant during its existence, and not **FROM** it when it is notoriously dead. The parent plant, if I may be allowed the figure, conceives its offspring; imparts to it its nutritive properties; nurtures it up, and commits it to the care of its foster parent; and then, whether the old plant live or die, if accident interpose not, the young plant shoots forth.

"It is part of my chain of argument (says this writer) to shew that it is perfectly accordant to nature, that beings distinct in their nature, &c. are the constant productions even of present nature from dead bodies of animals." Well, let us see how he shews it. "The little newt, and almost every insect change their skins; the lobster renews its claws; the salamander and lizard reproduce their lost legs and tails." The stale story about the butterfly is introduced too. "All quadrupeds change their external covering; the aerial birds their plumage; serpents their skins; and crustaceous animals lose their shells." Can he have the hardihood to say that any of these things are produced **FROM** the dead bodies of animals, when upon the very face of what he asserts, there is the fullest demonstration that they are all produced **BY** organic matter, in full possession of its animal properties?

If my prolixity has not already caused disgust, I will notice one more observation, and dismiss the subject. "Let a box-tree (says he) be planted in the city of London, &c. in a few revolving years it finds life recede, till at last it lingers about the root, and the whole plant dies; but just before this has taken place" (Now this is the rub!)—just before this has taken place—yes, but let that take place; let every vestige of circulation be destroyed, and then if he can restore the plant to life—the point he has aimed at will be established. He tells us, "Organic life in vegetation lays in the bark, and may be lost by destroying the circulation," and asks, "Is not such a destruction death? Yes, as sure as two and two make four; but if the circulation is only reduced (no matter how low), and not absolutely extinct, then I will not admit that it is death; neither will I admit that the reviving of that circulation is a resurrection from the dead."

It appears evident, that "T.", amongst other things, has been contending for a possibility of the resurrection, and has taken great pains to prove that the author of nature has power

to raise the dead. Now many people would readily grant that Deity has this power : but there is a great difference between believing that he has it, and that he employs it in the way it is asserted.

After what I have said, there is little occasion for me to repeat, that I deduce nothing from nature's laws, which substantiates the fact, or even favours the idea of the resurrection of the dead. If, therefore, I do hold this faith ; if I do entertain this cheering idea, I must have other foundation whereon to rest my confidence and establish my hope : and nothing, in my opinion, seems calculated to form this basis, except Christianity, fairly and fully established on rational principles. Would I were convinced that this is the case !—I do not, by expressing this doubt, mean to detract any thing from the merit of Christianity : for I assert, that the moral doctrine which it displays and enforces, and the sentiments it inculcates, are admirable and sublime, and worthy the support of the most exalted in society ; that the hope which it inspires, and the promises it exhibits, have the greatest tendency to promote emulation in the paths of virtue ; but, on the other hand, I must say, that its consummation, that which seals the whole, the resurrection of its author—is dark, equivocal, mysterious. With the Deists, I contend, that the resurrection of Christ's dead body is incompatible with all I know of nature. But admitting the fact, and that the testimony we have of it, renders its veracity incontrovertible, still there are circumstances connected with it, which in my opinion require explanation. We might reasonably expect that the body, after it was re-animated, would again possess all the faculties and power which it previously enjoyed, and would be able to exercise itself in all the functions of its former state : but how it could, with these, combine all the supernatural powers it possessed—how it could perform all those ghost-like actions which are recorded, and could become incorruptible—in what manner this corporeal substance could appear or vanish instantly, or transform itself, or enter a room, “ the doors being shut ”—and how it could, finally, be “ carried up into heaven ” and enjoy immortality—how all or any of these things could be, I have not power to conceive ; and how they can be reconciled to reason, I have yet to learn.

These circumstances, Sir, operate with me, at present, against admitting the efficacy of Christianity : and if any of your enlightened correspondents will attempt to remove the cause, they will have the unaffected thanks of a person, who is ever willing to believe the truth.

I remain, &c.

Stepney, Nov. 19, 1811.

A. B.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,

HAVING been for sometime a free and sincere enquirer after truth, I greatly rejoiced on seeing your Magazine advertized on the cover of the Monthly Repository. Accordingly, when the first number came out, I sent for it, and have continued to take in the work ever since : and I can with pleasure assure you, that I have acquired by it more important information than from any other source whatever.

Placing the greatest confidence in your candor, I take the liberty of submitting a few thoughts which have recently exercised my mind, and beg that you will cause them to be answered through the medium of your valuable publication.

Suppose a person were to come into this country, who understood our language and that only, but who had never heard of the existence of the Bible—and I were to give him a copy of it, saying, at the same time, Sir, I take the liberty of presenting you with this book, and beg you will carefully read it through, for it contains a revelation from God to man, and it is essentially necessary that you become acquainted with its sacred contents, as thereon depends your happiness or misery in a future state :—after this, I should give him a brief history of it ; the manner of its having been handed down through the different ages ; of its translation from the original language ; with a summary of the evidences by which it is supported. When he had complied with my request, he tells me that he found therein many good things, exactly consonant with the opinion he had previously imbibed of the God of nature ; but there are others which seemed to him altogether legendary, and to which he could not possibly give credit. It seems also (adds he) very hard that my future happiness or misery should depend on my views of this book : what you have said respecting its authenticity is ingenious enough, and perhaps to you satisfactory, as you are a learned man, and have had leisure and opportunity for prying into antiquity, which advantages I shall never enjoy : but as you lay no claim to infallibility, it is possible that you yourself may be deceived on some points, and consequently, were I blindly to admit your testimony, I should fall into the same error. However, as you have many strong arguments on your side, and my curiosity is awakened thereby, I shall be glad to see the subject fully investigated, to know *what obligation* I am really under to receive this book as a divine revelation, seeing I have no proper qualification for investigating its authenticity for myself.

How am I to know that the different parts were written by the persons whose names they bear? Then, admitting that such was the case, how am I to know, that those persons were well qualified to ascertain the truth of what they have related; or that they were men of such veracity, as to testify the truth of what they did know? Again, how am I to know that these different parts have all been faithfully transmitted down to the present day, and that they are justly rendered into the English language?—Also, admitting that the *miracles* recorded in the histories of Moses and Christ were necessary to establish the truth of their divine missions, why has there not been a succession of them, to preserve these histories pure and uncorrupted, in every particular, throughout all the ages of their existence? Supposing the present canon of Scripture and the English version of it to be correct, how am I to act, seeing that men of equal talents and integrity have deduced from it opinions so widely different? Some persons, perhaps, will say, study the Bible for yourself, and pray to God to enlighten your understanding: but, admitting that I follow this practice, how am I then to know whether or not my conclusions, when drawn, are true, as many pious men have done so before me, and yet have formed systems very different from one another; and I, surely, ought not to suppose that my mind will receive greater illumination than theirs?—These are questions of some importance, and deserve a serious, unsophisticated solution.

Before I close, I beg leave to observe, that though I do not agree with the Unitarians in those particulars wherein you have departed from them, yet I am sorry to see so respectable a denomination treated with such acrimony in several of your numbers. If Mr. Aspland, or any other individual, has manifested disrespect towards your society, that certainly gives no just cause for animadversions on the whole body. Doctor Priestley has also been treated very lightly. Granting that he did not go far enough, yet candour must allow that his Herculean labours have materially assisted in restoring Christianity to its original simplicity; and therefore his memory well deserves veneration from every friend to free enquiry. I am inclined to believe that your Magazine would not have appeared at this time, had not the doctor led the way.

A peculiar regard for the credit and continuance of your work occasioned these remarks, and I hope they will be kindly received.

Plymouth Dock, Nov. 16, 1811.

MINIMUS.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,
I CANNOT coincide with a correspondent, who signs himself a Deist, in your Magazine for December; and who asserts that "there is nothing in the usual course of nature, which bears the most distant analogy to the supposed resurrection of the human person."

In endeavouring to shew the fallacy of the above assertion, I shall confine myself principally to practical chemistry, and attempt to demonstrate, that there is nothing in the resurrection of man which is irrelevant to the order of things, or strictly inconsonant with the course of nature.

On the dissolution of the human frame decomposition takes place, and the body being deprived of the elementary principles with which it was united, becomes putrescent, and returns to its mother earth. But although the disposition of the human person is radically changed, yet it is not annihilated. The destruction of matter is as impossible as the creation of it, and the revivification of matter in the form of man perfectly compatible with the laws of philosophy. Although by a metallic solution the properties of the acid and metal are completely changed, and a compound is formed partaking of the qualities of neither, chemists find no difficulty in restoring the metal from its calx to its original purity. We shall find likewise that nature is continually exhausting and renovating herself. Man decomposes the atmospheric air, retains the vital, and emits the azote; hence the atmosphere becomes impoverished, but the vegetable part of creation restores the equilibrium, by retaining the mephitic and emitting the pure vital, or oxygen gas.

If man, by chemical agency, has it in his power to analyze the productions of nature, and resolve them to their first principles—to extract the metal and the acid in every possible state of combination—to disunite the elementary bodies of the ancients, is it irrational to suppose, that Providence cannot by similar means recall the component parts of man, and again reanimate them? The seed, after having been sown for a short period in the earth, shoots forth with lustre; and having beamed awhile, decays, and deposits its original species. This, if not conclusive evidence, bears at least a strong similitude to the resurrection of man.

If matter were perishable, a doubt might exist as to the reorganization of the corporeal substance; but as it is impossible to create something out of nothing, and nothing out of something, man, as man, may be destroyed, but, as matter, cannot be reduced to nonentity.

I might adduce numberless scriptural authorities to prove the resurrection of the human being, but these your correspondent regards as mere traditionary facts, which are unsupported by any thing like reason, and wholly at variance with philosophical researches.

Your's, &c.

Dec. 9, 1811.

AMICUS.

ON WATER BAPTISM.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,

IN my last, I stated the occasion of my being delivered unto Satan, the mode of proceeding by which that was done, and what followed thereupon. I now proceed to give you a *farther Narrative*, being the substance of my defence on that occasion.

John the Baptist, who was a man sent from God, for the special purpose of making the Messiahship of Jesus manifest to the Jews, his countrymen, and to them only; that Jesus should be manifest to Israel; *therefore*, says John, am I come, baptizing into water. Here there is no commission, or even reference, to the baptizing of Gentiles into water; no, not by Jesus himself, whom John invariably pointed to as the Messiah that was to come into the world, and who was now about to establish that vital religion which was ultimately to overthrow all others, even that which God himself established on the earth by his servant Moses. Jesus came with that power with which he was invested by God the father, to sit as a refiner of silver, as one that winnows corn, gathering the wheat into his garner, and burning all the chaff in fire unquenchable. These figurative expressions I believe refer to what was to take place in the minds of men upon the reception of the gospel of Jesus.

There appears to have been a hearsay report spread abroad, that Jesus was baptizing with water in the land of Judea: but John, the beloved disciple, who is justly supposed to have known more of his master's mind and will than any of the other Apostles, has most remarkably cautioned all who should read or hear his writings, against entertaining such an idea as that of Jesus ever practising water baptism, by stating within a parenthesis that Jesus baptized not, being unworthy the character of him who came to set up a kingdom purely spiritual, not consisting of divine ordinances, meats and drinks, beggarly elements, days and months, and times and years, neither holy-days nor sabbaths, which being a shadow of things to come and perish in the using, were to cease when Christ the substance came: not instantaneously, but as the minds of men were able to bear the new and important truths taught by Je-

sus and his Apostles. Wherefore, argues the Apostle Paul, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?

It is said the disciples of Jesus did baptize, and that they were not forbidden of him to do so. Admitted; for I might as well suppose that Jesus would forbid John and his disciples to baptize with water, as to forbid his own to do so; for the kingdom of God, of which this ordinance was to form no part, was not yet fully established, though at hand. John also bore witness, that he, meaning his commission and work, was to decrease, but that of Jesus was to increase. John was a burning and shining light, but continued only for a short time; long enough, however, to make it manifest unto Israel that Jesus was the Christ, which appears to have been the sole purpose of his mission.

I come now to the grand foundation on which is built the superstructure of water baptism, whether it be by immersion, sprinkling, or pouring—the commission of Jesus, spoken by him to his eleven Apostles after his resurrection from the dead, which I read thus: All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and *disciple* all nations, 'baptizing them *into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and, lo! I am with you alway unto the end of the world. Who art thou, O great mountain? let me view thy parts, scale thine height, and search thy bottom, to see if there be water wherewith the nations were to be baptized by the apostles of Jesus, to whom this commission was given. In the first place I can discover no water here at all, not even a single drop for an infant, nor any thing like a river or a baptism for adults. Making disciples of all nations, baptizing them, have generally been considered to mean two separate acts; the making of disciples by the preaching of the gospel, and then to baptize them into water. Not so do I understand the commission, but that it means one undivided apostolic act, the washing of water *by the word*. The gospel preached by the Apostles, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, the disciples being then translated into the kingdom of God, were to be further taught and admonished of those things pertaining thereto.

Jesus did not command his apostles to preach the gospel, or make disciples of all nations, *and* baptize them, but to do it baptizing; so I maintain, that for want of that little word *and* in the commission, the very foundation for water baptism is overthrown. Peter makes use of the word *baptized* as synonymous with *converted*. (Compare Acts ii. 38. with iii. 19.) This was a baptism, a change or conversion, whereby their sins were blotted out. How? not by water is very certain, but by

calling on the name of the Lord. I will illustrate this by relating the affair of Paul's baptism. Ananias says to Paul, "and now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Now here, I admit water baptism is meant, and faith in Jesus; two separate things: but if the words ran thus, "arise and be baptized, washing away thy sins," it would do away water baptism entirely (See Acts xxii. 16); nor is there any thing remarkable, that Ananias, a devout man, according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, should baptize the Apostle Paul with water—a man so amiable in his temper, and condescending to the Jews, his countrymen, in every thing not actually unlawful. And let it be observed, it does not appear that Ananias was told to make use of water in this instance.

The three thousand souls converted on the day of Pentecost it is more than probable were not baptized into water at all, but into Jesus Christ, by faith in his resurrection. They that gladly received the word were baptized (converted) certainly; they put on Christ; they continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine, the breaking of bread, and the fellowship and prayers. Baptismal water has certainly prevailed, like some epidemic distemper in the heads of adult persons, and does so to an alarming degree in the present day, much more so than the hydrocephalus does in children; the consequence of which is, their senses and reason are defiled therewith.

The commission (as related by Mark) reads thus: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," &c. Now the baptism here spoken of is separate and distinct from the belief of the truth, and evidently means the baptism of the spirit, which was confined to the apostolic age, as affording sufficient evidence of the truth of the Christian religion for all future generations. The Apostles, and many others who believed on Christ, were thus baptized; they (the Apostles) went forth and preached everywhere; the Lord working with and confirming the word with the following signs: such as casting out demons in the name of Jesus, speaking with new tongues, &c. in the case of Cornelius, and all that were with him who heard the word preached by Peter, the holy spirit fell on them, as on the Apostles at the beginning; they spake with tongues, prophesied, and did magnify God. The disciples at Ephesus, to whom Paul preached, were thus baptized also. The sum and substance of Christ's commission to the Apostles appears to be, as recorded by Luke, comparing their several testimonies. They were to preach repentance and remission of sins, in the name or authority of Jesus, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, where they were to tarry till properly qualified

for such an arduous undertaking, Jesus promising to be with them to the end of the world, or uttermost part of the earth.

How it could ever enter the minds of men of all denominations since the Apostles days, who, undertaking the *cure of souls*, have with such assurance concluded that this commission was addressed to them also, I am at a loss to conceive, unless it be this one thing, they have beheld the *golden cup* in the hand of the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones. 'These merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. How suitable do the words of Nathan, "thou art the man," apply to the many thousands who mount the pulpit in this country, to go no farther? Have I not seen dissenting preachers dressed in the habiliments of Rome, and the name of blasphemy engraved on their doors? Have I not seen the enlightened Unitarian teacher exalted above his fellows, with fine linen bands, and a long silk gown? O, ye friends of sacred truth, by whatsoever name ye may be called, is there any of these and such like things belonging to the religion of Jesus?

It is said, that the Apostles understood Jesus to mean water baptism in his commission, and practised it accordingly. I believe they understood no such thing, though it cannot be denied that the Apostles Peter and Paul did baptize; but if such practice was in obedience to the new command of Jesus, how came it to pass that neither of them used the formula prescribed by their lord and master on those occasions, and so universally used in the present day? and how came it to pass that Peter should, when his judgment was more matured, and he more fully understood his lord's commission, hesitate a moment about baptizing Cornelius and his company with water, after every doubt seemed to be removed from his mind, as to the true import of Christ's commission. But there appeared to be some difficulty on this subject in the mind of Peter, or it would not have been said of him, then answered Peter; and his asking the question he did. After all, he commanded them to be baptized, leaving that ceremony to be performed by those of the circumcision who accompanied him.

Peter soon after the above transaction was called upon by the Apostles and brethren that were in Judea to give an account of this matter to them of the circumcision, for they still considered it unlawful to eat with Gentiles. Peter, therefore, rehearsed from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, but says not a word about water baptism as having been observed; nor does it appear that the Apostles and brethren present even asked Peter the question whether he *had* baptized them or not; of so little, if any, consequence did they consider water baptism as being necessary for Gentile con-

verts. The concluding part of this meeting is worthy of remark : after Peter had finished his speech, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted *repentance unto life*. This one thing needful was quite sufficient to satisfy their minds, without any question or jarring contention about water baptism, the very first ceremony insisted on at the present time in some form or other to be observed.

After this, we find Peter again rehearsing the matter before the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem ; he speaks of the Gentiles as having heard the word of the gospel, and believing ; God also giving them the gift of the holy ghost, and their hearts being purified by the faith ; but not any mention of water baptism. If we are to believe any thing on supposition, I can only say, " In at that door hath all superstition crept." Surely at such a meeting as this, convened for the express purpose of forming a code of laws needful to be observed by Gentile churches, if water baptism was to have been a standing ordinance in those churches, it would have been mentioned at this time. Those few things that were enjoined appear to have been only requisite for the then existing circumstances and state of the Gentile churches.*

I am persuaded, by scriptural evidence, that in every instance of the Apostles or others baptizing with water after the resurrection of Jesus, it was observed in compliance to the prejudices of their countrymen the Jews ; or it arose from their imperfect view of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, as in the case of Peter objecting to eat with his Gentile brethren when they of the circumcision were present. (Gal. ii. 12.) The Apostle Paul carried this compliance to a very great length ; see his conduct at Jerusalem, through the entreaty of James and all the elders present (Acts xxi. 19—27.) The same Apostle thought proper to circumcise Timothy, because of the Jews which were in those quarters, although he was present at the apostolic council a little time before, when the practice of circumcision was for ever abolished among the Gentiles.

It is very evident that the church at Jerusalem continued to observe the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses for some time after the death of Christ, probably till the place was destroyed by the Romans. I infer from these circumstances, that however proper it may have been for Jewish converts to observe Jewish ceremonies, such as the passover supper, or only bread and wine as a part of it, or water baptism, that also being a Jewish ceremony, though not of the Mosaic dispensation, they

* I have seen in the margin of some Bible, the word translated fornication in Acts xv. 20, and 29, rendered swine's flesh. Whether the original will admit this interpretation I do not know.

were altogether useless and improper for Gentile churches. Paul himself declares that Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the gospel, yet we find he baptized Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, and a few others. Even these had made such a bad use of it, that the Apostle thanks God he baptized no more of them, appearing convinced of the evil consequences resulting from such practice.

The evidences in favour of water baptism, if any, to be found in the epistles are very slender. Paul to the church of God at Rome—"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? (Rom. vi. 3.) Paul to the Galatians—"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Gal. iii. 27.) Surely no water is meant here but the *washing of water by the word*, preached unto them, whereby Christ doth sanctify and cleanse his church. (Ephes. v. 14-27.) Paul to the Corinthians, who were turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, the Apostle, putting them in mind of what they once were says, "and such were some of you: but ye *are washed*, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit (*word*) of our God (1 Cor. v. 11); for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit. (1 Cor. 12. 13.) The writer to the Hebrews speaks of their hearts being sprinkled (cleansed) from an evil conscience, and their bodies (living souls) being washed with *pure water*. (Heb. x. 22.) Nowhere do I read in the New Testament of pure water implying common river or spring water; nor does it here. The word of God is pure, converting the soul. This view of the subject accords with the prayer of Jesus for his disciples, and those who should believe on him through their ministry. Sanctify (cleanse) them through thy truth; thy word is truth. Paul to the Colossians, says, they were buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also they were risen (not with water, but) through the faith of the operation of God. (Col. ii. 12.)

The two following evidences of baptism I consider as decisive:—Peter writing to believers in general, mentions the eight persons that were saved by water in the ark. The like figure whereunto (or whose antitype) baptism, doth now save us (not the putting off the filth of the flesh, or baptism of water, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by (or through the belief of) the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God. Here the Apostle Peter plainly shews what is the one saving baptism, and what is not. The testimony of Paul is equally clear; in his epistle to the saints at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ

Jesus, he positively states that there is but one Lord (Christ), one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all.

Now I have been told that this *one baptism* means two, the type and antitype. I might on the very same ground be told that the Apostle here means one lord to be two lords, one faith two faiths, one God two Gods; surely then, I must study some theological arithmetic to understand the cyphers made use of in holy writ. Baptism into water has been said to be meant; this I disbelieve, because it does not correspond with the one saving baptism stated by Peter afore-noticed, and likewise it would be making the Apostle Paul guilty of a very important omission by not stating that there was one Lord's Supper in his summary of articles necessary to be believed by the faithful in Christ Jesus in all ages; nor can this one baptism mean that of the spirit, which was confined to the Apostles days, though I have heard of some in after ages professing to be baptized of the holy ghost or the spirit, but there have been those visible and undeniable signs wanting, as mentioned by Mark; therefore I conclude they must have erred, not knowing the scriptures.

It may now be asked what baptism do I take it to be? why, truly, I do believe the Apostle Paul to mean the very same one baptism as that which Peter describes to be the saving baptism; nor can I express it in plainer terms than he has done, i. e. The answer of a good conscience towards God, by (or through the belief of) the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This I consider to be the only one Christian baptism, by which we may obtain eternal life. So saith the Scripture. The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (Rom. x. 8 and 9). Viewing the subject in this light I feel myself justified in rejecting water baptism as an unnecessary and Anti-Christian ceremony.

If, Sir, this my farther narrative meets your approbation, I purpose to conclude the same in my next, by a few remarks on what is commonly called the Lord's Supper.

I remain, your's, &c.

Stoke Newington, December 4, 1811.

W. C.

P. S. I have had nothing to say about infant baptism, or sprinkling, as the church to which I did belong do not held in such an absurd and ridiculous practice, having neither Scripture nor reason to support it.

ON THE FALLIBILITY OF JESUS.

To "A Countryman."

SIR,

UNWILLING to enter into a contest, to see who can appear the most crabbed, to your superior ability, in this line, I willingly yield the pre-eminence; and if to this disposition, you continue incorrigibly determined to put doubts and assertions for reasons, without requiring future deprecations of chastisement, I will leave you to your own way, and to the consequences, should you at any time prove to me unintelligible.

The first passage you quote, to prove that the church has Scripture authority for being called the church of Christ, is Acts xx. 21. "Feed the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood." In most manuscripts it is "feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with the blood of the Christ;" others read, "feed the church of God which he purchased with blood:" and others read, "with the blood of his own (evidently) son." I think it is Aratas, A. D. 544, reads "feed the church which the Christ purchased." Various other ways has this passage been found; and shall a passage which speaks of *the blood of God*—a disputed passage—a passage nowhere supported by other Scripture evidence, have any weight, when it speaks language contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, which invariably calls the church—the church of God?

Matt. xvi. 18. "On this rock will I build my church." Your own quotations prove, that this passage does not countenance you, in calling the Christian church the church of Christ; for, if the *Christ is the head*, and the church is his body (Col. i. 18), then all Christians are the members of this one body, in the very same sense, that every man's own body belongs to his own head, i. e. both united together are one complete person; but though this body belongs to this individual head by so close a union, that the individual person is destroyed by the absence of either, yet both when united in one person, may be the property of another person. Thus, though a slave's body belongs to his head, and the head to the body, and to no other head or body, yet both united in one person are the individual property of the owner. So is the Christian church considered, and alone called in the New Testament *the church of God*. Founding, therefore, his church on this declaration of Peter, "thou art the Messiah, the son of the living God," he calls it his; not as being the builder, but as being the

foundation on which it shall be erected, to the glory of God the Father.

It is certainly not quite correct, when you say "I have brought a charge of fallibility against Jesus." I made no charge, but only an observation, "that Jesus, from temptations, appears to have been a fallible man;" and the observation appears to me to be scripturally correct. James (i. 13) says, "God cannot be tempted to evil." Where there cannot be temptations, there cannot be fallibility. Jesus was tempted; he resisted; he conquered; he rose superior to his capability of falling; and therefore, was a conqueror. It follows, that his being capable of being tempted, proves him to have been a fallible man, and not an infallible God.

With you, I believe that Jesus had all power *in heaven and in earth*; that is, over the ecclesiastical and civil polity of the Jewish kingdom (see Heb. xii. 28—29). I have no objection to extend this power *to all nations, and all religions* being subjected beneath the footstool of his throne, but if you extend it to the sun, moon, and stars, I shall demand evidence.

When you observe that if Christ was fallible, he was an improper person to have such a power committed to him, with your assertion you should have given scriptural evidence and argument, otherwise the assertion is very bold; and it would have been kind and instructive on your part, to have here answered that part of my argument which shewed, that though God alone was infallible, yet in their office, "Jesus, his messengers, and the church, are each and all infallible whilst (*and only whilst*) they obey an infallible God." And all the authority of infallibility the true church, the messengers of Jesus, or Jesus himself, lay claim to, is that which is derived from perfect and implicit obedience to Deity.

The words of the officers of the Pharisees, *never man spake like this man*, cannot have any thing to do with the fallibility or infallibility of Jesus. It is not God who says them, but human beings—men who spake of the manner in which Jesus taught, compared with the public teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees; as your quotation from Matthew proves. These men, like the whole of the Jewish nation, were astonished at the teaching of Jesus, as he taught the people with that authority, which shewed he had a right to instruct; not because he was infallible, but because he taught them only the truth he had received from an infallible God.

Adding a few letters to my former initial, I remain, &c.
December 3, 1811.

Tonio.

REMARKS ON THE PRECEPTS OF JESUS, WHICH INCULCATE
THE FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES: IN REPLY TO MR. BUR-
DON.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,

YOUR readers are now in possession of the reasons which have operated on the mind of Mr. Burdon, for the rejection of Christianity. Independently of his general axiom, that "there never was, nor ever will be, such a thing as a divine revelation," he has gone the length of asserting that the religion of Jesus is not only "incomplete as a system of morality," but that it "contains many precepts totally impracticable and inapplicable to any situation of life, inasmuch as they are contrary to our nature."

The precepts, the "many precepts," which Mr. Burdon in his first letter thus designated, have since appeared to be those in which Jesus has impressed upon his followers the necessity of forbearance and forgiveness of injuries—such as love your enemies, resist not evil, &c.

At the same time that Mr. Burdon denies the probability, nay the possibility, of a divine revelation, he will not perhaps carry his scepticism quite so far, as to call in question either the necessity which has existed, or the advantages which would have resulted from such an event, had it by any possible chance happened to have been in the power of Omnipotence to have brought it about.

From the earliest records of history it is indeed evident, that in almost every age, and under every climate, the human race has been uniformly in want of an instructor, who was capable of directing it to the mansions of virtue, and emancipating it from the dungeons of vice and misery—of extricating the persecuted from the iron-haunted grasp of oppression, and shedding the light of reason on the benighted victims of error and superstition.

The necessity, or the advantages, which would probably result from such interference having been, for the sake of argument, allowed, let us next enquire what are the evils which, from their magnitude and ill consequences to mankind, would principally be supposed to draw the attention of a messenger of the Most High; and what the means, which would most probably be recommended, or could most effectually be employed for their extinction.

First, then, let it be asked, whether there exists a principle more pregnant with mischief, or which has brought a greater degree of misery on individuals, and society at large, than has been produced by a spirit of revenge, and a desire of retaliation.

tion for instances of real or supposed "insult, injury, and injustice."

Now whether we consider this passion, or principle, in the bosom of him who feels it, or the fate of him who is the victim of its fury,—whether we regard it in its causes, or pursue it in its consequences—it must appear to every reflecting mind as a sentiment equally despicable and dangerous—a feeling totally destructive of human happiness, and a virtue of which demons might be proud. Nor is it more the nature, than the extent of the evil which is here to be dreaded—this is no crime of rare occurrence, which, affecting the fortunes, the happiness, or the life of a solitary individual, may be suffered to continue unchecked without materially depreciating the general happiness of mankind; but it is a passion which appears to be the native of every human breast, and to whose direful consequences every individual is without exception exposed. Such is revenge! such are the circumstances attendant on that system of retaliation, and such the natural consequences of that spirit of resentment, which the world has been, and still continues to be, in the habit of indulging. The evil is indeed dreadful in its extent, and alarming in its nature: let us hear the remedy prescribed by Jesus—the means which he advised for its alleviation, or the method which he has commanded for its extinction.

"If (says he) a man strike you on the one cheek, turn to him the other also."—That this is no more than a figurative and highly beautiful mode of expressing the propriety of resignation and forgiveness of injuries, it is unnecessary for me to observe; it would indeed be an insult to the understanding of Mr. B. and your other readers, to suspect them of entertaining a contrary opinion. And, considered in this point of view, so far from operating to the increase of insults, and serving as the means of inviting a continuation of injuries, it must necessarily have a directly opposite effect; for who does not see, that by this means, the evil is effectually arrested in its progress—nay, crushed at its birth, nipped as it were in the very bud? one link of the never-ending chain of retaliation is broken—one number in the infinite series is destroyed, and the remainder falls innoxious and unnoticed to the earth.

To this it may be, perhaps, replied, that the propriety of a spirit of revenge, and a desire of retaliation, was never designed to be contended for; the precepts of Jesus being stigmatized as imperfect and impracticable, not because they opposed such evil propensities, but because they tended to generate a spirit of "meanness" and "servility," and to expose their professors to the "insults, injuries, and injustice" of mankind; let us therefore, for a moment, examine this part of the subject. And first, I would observe that it has been frequently, and with great appearance of justice, remarked, that in most religious contro-

versies, the charge of partiality has been as often deserved by the sceptic as by the enthusiast, and that bigotry has by no means been confined to the believer. How else, indeed, were not this the case, could we account for Mr. Burdon's deprecating, as mean and contemptible in the Christian, that very line of conduct, which the whole world, and doubtless himself among the number, has joined to admire in the heathen, the hero, and the man of the world? To pardon the injuries and forget the insults, to pity the vindictive feelings, and rise superior to the unfounded resentments of our mistaken fellow-creatures, has ever been deemed the height of virtue, and the very acmé of magnanimous feeling. That it should be even yet more admired than it has been, it is only necessary that the practice should be more generally diffused, and the principle more frequently acted upon. To obtain, however, the admiration of such minds as Mr. Burdon's, it seems equally and indeed indispensably necessary, that those examples should not occur within the pale of the church, or that they should be derived from other principles of conduct than those contained in the "imperfect and inapplicable" precepts of Jesus. For, though they may admire as virtuous and magnanimous, the declaration of one of our sovereigns (*Elizabeth*) who, on ascending the throne, declared that the insults offered to the princess, were unworthy the remembrance of the queen; yet would they consider as unworthy and contemptible the conduct of the individual, who, mounting the throne of reason to a dominion over himself and his passions, should declare that the injuries committed against the man, were unworthy the resentment of the philosopher and the Christian.

And should too the plainness of these strictures draw on me the displeasure of Mr. Burdon, and subject me to the punishment of a reply, how, Sir, might I naturally expect to extricate myself from so dangerous and distressing a dilemma? Struck by him on the one cheek, I should but expose myself, the object of his contempt and derision, were I to act up to the precepts of Jesus, and turn the other also; whereas, I might not only appeal with a probable degree of success to his forbearance, but even hope to lay claim to his admiration, if I addressed him with the somewhat similar sentiment of the hero of antiquity—"Strike! but hear me." The reason of this distinction is obvious—Themistocles was not a Christian.

Spite, however, of the preference which is thus so frequently given to the examples of heathen magnanimity, over the precepts of Christian forbearance, I think that in reality they are (if the expression may be allowed) infinitely inferior. In the first we see indeed the wild exuberations of, perhaps, a generous and exalted character; but, in the last we behold the admirably constructed principles of an enlightened and ameliorating

policy. The former may be compared to a fire-brand, which, glaring majestically amid the gloom of ages, serves but to render the surrounding darkness more profound ; while the latter may be likened to the first beams of the rising sun, which bids fair to illumine the whole extent of the horizon, and diffuse happiness and prosperity over the earth.

Thus much on the meanness and servility attendant on the precepts of Jesus ; but it appears that they are not more “ imperfect ” than “ inapplicable ”—not merely contemptible, but dangerous to their professors, by subjecting them, in a peculiar manner, to “ insult, injury, and injustice.”

Now that the practice of these precepts would wholly exempt a man, or might not indeed in many instances be the express means of exposing him to insult, injury, and injustice, no one has ever pretended to affirm. Unfortunately, as society at present is constituted, there is, perhaps, no state of life, or mode of conduct, which could completely protect a man from the violence of his fellow creatures ; and each several situation is of course exposed to its own various and distinctive modes of oppression, peculiar perhaps to itself, and different in nature and degree from those of every other ; but it does not from thence the less plainly appear, that the serenity of a life of benevolence, and the quietness of a spirit of forbearance, are not less likely to expose their possessors to the insults and the injustice of mankind, than that quarrelsome spirit of resistance and retaliation, which Mr. Burdon and the world at large have designated as “ prudent and requisite, manly and ingenuous.” And it is even a question, as a matter of mere policy, independent of the consideration of its propriety, whether a man could pursue better advice than that given by Jesus, to “ agree with the adversary quickly.”

The doctrine of forgiveness of injuries will indeed, if properly examined, be found at once admirably adapted to the wants and the true interests of mankind, and excellently calculated for the peace and security of society ; while, on the contrary, the principle of revenge or resistance, however modified, if once admitted as a general principle, or regarded as a praise-worthy and commendable motive of action, is extremely dangerous both to the general and individual happiness of the human race. It is in the very nature of retaliation to be at once boundless in its degree, and ceaseless in its operation ; for if, on any given occasion, its exertion should even appear, in the first instance, to be both “ prudent and requisite ” (which must however be wholly left to the discretion of a prejudiced individual)—if, however, it should be proved to be proper and even praise-worthy in the first instance, who shall determine the extent to which the evil may be carried, or the fatal consequences of which it may eventually be productive ? Retaliation

on the one part serves but to excite retaliation on the other; the evil, like the accumulating snows of the Alpine regions, proceeds with accelerated progress; and, though perfectly harmless at the commencement of its career, too often concludes in the desolation of the surrounding countries, and the destruction of all within the reach of its influence.

Nor can it be affirmed that this is an exaggerated picture, or that I am singular in affirming such to be the natural consequences of the system recommended by Mr. Burdon; for it is against that very system, and these the natural consequences thereof, that the vast and extended machine of government has, throughout all ages, and in every nation, been constructed and enforced. To take from individuals the power of discretionary retaliation, is the only legitimate object of every legislator. Prevention for the future is now almost universally allowed to be the only rational plea for the infliction of punishment; but this, when left to the arbitrary discretion of individuals, always has been found, and always will be found, to degenerate into the exercise of revenge for the past. To remedy this evil, and do away its attendant ill consequences, are the sole ends proposed by political institution.* And let me ask, has that end been obtained? It surely has not. The general maxim on which governments have proceeded for the punishment and prevention of crime has been that of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" and of the efficacy of this maxim, whether exercised by princes, or acted upon by individuals, we have had, and still continue to have, sufficient experience. The blood-stained page of history, the private annals of undiscovered violence, and the public records of the Old-Bailey, are comments on the text. The maxims of the world, and the principles of Mr. Burdon, have therefore been sufficiently tried in the balance, and they have invariably been found wanting. The evil still remains—the remedy continues yet undiscovered. Let us then briefly examine the efficiency of the much-despised precepts of Jesus. We have seen their propable effects on the individual, let us now consider their consequences to society at large; and, for the sake of rendering these the plainer, and more apparent, let us for a moment suppose, that as many as now seek redress from the laws of their country, or expect to escape from future injustice by the exertion of a spirit of re-

* It has been justly observed (I believe by Mr. Burke) that all the taxes paid by the people are for the mere support of the twelve judges. The only business of those judges is to exercise that power of punishment and prevention by the laws, which is found so dangerous to society when committed to the discretion of individuals. A man who should now exercise that discretion is in fact *out-lawed*—to use the technical expression—"he has taken the law into his own hands;" and has therefore, by denying the necessity, divested himself of the advantages resulting from its exercise.

sistance, were to act upon the principle laid down by Jesus, of returning good for evil, and blessing those that persecuted them—let us, I say, suppose this, and is it not evident that the aggregate happiness, safety, and prosperity, of the human race, would be increased to an incalculable degree?

How many thousands are there who (animated by the much-boasted-of virtue “patriotism”) now regard with contempt and abhorrence the natives of every other country than their own, and think every means justifiable for their extermination? Thousands, and tens of thousands, daily fall victims to this principle; but let me ask, could this be so, if men resolved to “love their enemies, to bless those that cursed them, and pray for those that despitely used and persecuted them?”

For the numerous and destructive evils which have so long infested society—*this, this* is the only remedy. The discretion of individuals, and the providence of political institutions, are mere palliatives, which experience has proved incapable of affording more than a momentary and uncertain relief, but this is an antidote, possessed of equal potency, and capable of an equal degree of extension with the poison it is intended to counteract—an antidote, which, if fairly exhibited to the system, will pursue the venom to the remotest fibre of the frame of society, and transmute the corroding mineral of revenge into the very “milk of human kindness.”

Carried away by my subject, I have gone into greater lengths than I had proposed, and must therefore, at present, content myself with briefly observing, that the principle of forgiveness of injuries, as laid down by Jesus in the precepts in question, appear to me at once founded on the justest principles of philosophy, and the most correct and enlightened views of the nature and condition of mankind—not more adapted to prepare man for happiness in a future, than actually to render him happy in his present, state of existence.

If the world be indeed one great family, connected by a similarity of situation, and liable to a similarity of failings, then is universal benevolence and forbearance an indispensable duty.

If crimes proceed solely from ignorance, and vice be in reality wholly founded on error, then is it evident, that, to reclaim mankind, our appeal must be to their reason and their understanding, not to their fear of punishment or dread of retaliation. If, indeed, we wish to plunge them deeper in their delusion, we have only to resist the evil, and resent the “insults, injuries, and injustice,” which they offer us.

The man who wishes to banish violence from the earth, can only effectually hope to attain his purpose, by setting the example in his own person. Such a one, if struck on the one

cheek, must, rather than avenge himself on his assailant, turn to him the other also.

While he who sees things as they really are, and acts to up the principles which that knowledge communicates; who feels that the true end of his being is not the pursuit of material dominion, but the attainment of mental excellence; such a one surely will reject, as beneath the dignity of his nature, a conduct so degrading to a rational mind; and, disdaining to copy the example of the brute creation, will emulate to the utmost of his power, and imitate to the extent of his ability, the conduct of that all-wise and beneficent Being, who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and who sendeth rain equally on the just and the unjust." I remain, &c.

J. D.

P. S. Mr. Burdon, in the course of his last communication, has put a question which appears to me effectually to decide the dispute. Speaking of the precepts of forbearance advised by Jesus, he somewhat triumphantly asks—"Is it thus that the clergy avoid going to law either for their tythes or their own private rights?" It certainly is not; let me in turn ask a question of Mr. B. Would their doing so be to him any recommendation of the principle?

ON THE RESURRECTION.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,

WHEN I addressed to you the two essays on the resurrection, (vol. i. p. 540 and 565) though I thought them of importance, I had not any idea of their exciting the attention of both Christians and Deists, and much less of meeting with a Christian's disapprobation. My mind not being changed on this subject, I consider it a pleasure to bear any censure they may produce.

In your last number, a Deist has offered me battle on conditions; to argue with such conditions would be, the having nothing to contend for; as, opposed to them, I have only to say that though I may guess at the attributes of Deity, I cannot assuredly know them, without he reveals them. Every conclusion concerning the past, present, and future, drawn from visible nature alone, is to me a mere hypothesis; because, though the laws of the world should prove to be absolutely fixed, and their operations to be constantly and steadily uniform, yet still from such known laws, and such uniform operations, the wisest man would not be able exactly to determine the nature of Deity, or his plan of administration.

Concerning the principle of life, we know not any thing. It is true, we can say, apparently when it begins to act, and also

generally when it has ceased ; but we cannot say, that it is in the organization alone ; or, that with the cessation of organic action, it will be extinguished ; or, that it lays dormant, to give existence to a new being ; and, therefore, to say when it is absolutely extinct in animal or vegetable ; or if it ever is so extinct, seeing our ignorance, it is at present an impossibility for man to say. Neither can we say, that the few instances given of a revival to life after death, are forgeries or falsehoods ; it is the evidence alone that ought to determine our reception or rejection of such said-to-be facts.

Though the very nature of the conditions offered compels me, from their consequences, to reject them ; I trust, that I shall not give offence, by proposing others that may bind us both to sound reasoning, right dispositions, and good manners ; for this purpose I would propose—

1. That the subject of the proposed controversy be intelligibly and clearly defined.

2. That you, Sir, shall be expected to lop off all extraneous matter ; as also sneering, contemptuous, and unmeaning argument, and language.

3. That each shall argue upon his own principles, without the other's unmannerly dictation.

To me, Mr. Editor, these conditions appear absolutely necessary to be agreed on, for your credit and our improvement, before we enter into controversy ; for at present, though we differ, the dispute is not began ; but it is a mistake, a *lapis penna*, when it is said there is a *point at issue* between us. There will be, when we agree to dispute, and have intelligibly and clearly defined our theme. That it is not yet so defined is evident, for the Deist says “ The point at issue is the stability of the laws of nature. I chuse to state the question generally, as being the least invidious, and as, perhaps, the best fitted, also, for open discussion.” After having made *this general point* to be at issue between us, the Deist proceeds to state the following proposition, “ that there is not sufficient reason to believe, that from the creation to this day, the laws of nature have, in a single instance, been disturbed ; and that to raise a man absolutely dead, from the grave, strictly involves such a disturbance.” Now, Sir, if there is a point at issue between us, which is it? *the general question, the stability of the laws of nature ; or the particular proposition, the disturbance of those laws by the resurrection of the dead ?* and, if the latter, is it *the particular resurrection of Jesus*, or is it *the general resurrection of man ?*

As this gentleman has too much real ability to be incapable of defining his theme, he must have a reason for his confusion. I hope he will pardon me for my suspicion, that it is through fear, to use his own words, of *startling* me with the magnitude of his intended subject, which I think to be, *the eternity of the*

present order of things. My reason for so thinking is, the similarity of this Deist's language and sentiments, and mode of arguing, with those used by "a Lover of Truth" (pages 381 and 401, vol. i.); so much so, that I identify them both as one person. (If I am wrong, I beg pardon.) At page 403 of the last mentioned letter, he writes, *that the attention* ought to be fixed "on the ordinary course of events, and to discard as fabulous and incredible, every story which implies a state of the world, and an order of things, essentially different from the present." These ideas run through all his writings, and are, only put into other words, again to be found in his fifth preliminary, where he says— "That as far back as authentic history will carry us, the course of nature appears to have been uniformly constant," &c. &c. This is not a new sentiment; near 1800 years back, Peter wrote (2 Epis. iii. 3, 4,) That in his days there were scoffers who said, "That since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as from the beginning of creation." As this is the subject, he wishes to argue, if I guess right, Mr. Editor, with your permission and this gentleman's consent, I will allow the stability of the laws of nature, and on that allowance contend against him, that so far from disarding, as fabulous and incredible, every story which implies a state of the world, and an order of things, essentially different from the present; I must, on the contrary, believe, if the laws of nature are stable, the past and future order of things have been, and will be, essentially different from the present.

But, Mr. Editor, should we enter into this controversy, I trust you will keep the conditions, and lop off extraneous matter. It will never do to admit such dogmatism and wildfire as at the end of the letter, page 401. In the letter last month on my essay there is but about six lines in the first page, and about five lines in the two last pages, that have any thing to do with the subject; and even the major part of the remaining argument is irrelevant. I am sure that this gentleman, if he is "a Deist," or "a Lover of Truth," would, if the case was his own, think such language and manner to be inoustrous.

In this letter, it is said, that I use the word *dead* most vaguely and indeterminately. As I understand the peculiar sense which I mean to convey by it, I think not; but it is not for me, but my readers, who are to determine this. I have argued that our Lord says, God can destroy the animal faculties, sensitive powers, living principle, conscious identity, or bodily faculties (or by whatever other name any one may please to call it), in the grave; and if our Lord's observation is true, death does not destroy this living principle. At p. 341, I have said, "That the Scriptures expect all men to die, and from their dead bodies, to be produced the future being." This, and indeed the whole of my argument, proves, that by death, I mean

the cessation of organization, as a preparation to a more perfect organization of the future being ; not an extinction of the living principle, but a giving it more perfect cloathing than flesh and blood. On this ground, I make a distinction between the resurrection of Jesus and the general resurrection of man, saying " If all men were first to die, and then were to have their identical bodies raised from the tomb, as Jesus had, there would be some reason to say, that it was opposite to the general process of nature, and therefore most probably not true." That these expressions are too *vague and indeterminate* to prove, that the living principle is extinguished by death, is true ; but, that they are not sufficiently explicit to be explanatory of the writer's ideas, I cannot believe, and I hope " A Deist" will excuse, in this instance, my infidelity.

On the resurrection of Jesus, I think, my observations were both intelligible, and to the point. If it is to be granted, by allowing the stability of the laws of nature, that all things go on in one continual round ; that what is to-day was yesterday, and ten thousand years back, and farther even, without beginning ; then they were not in point ; but as the Deist says, " There is not sufficient reason to believe, that from the creation to this day, the laws of nature have, in a single instance, been disturbed." By such an allowance, of there having once been a *creation*, the argument is in point, and it is his place to prove, that God did not make man a dead body, and then breathe into him the breath of life ; to prove that my argument is not analagous to breathing again a renovated life into the dead body of Jesus. If, in the first instance, it was not unnatural, because done by the God of Nature ; in the second instance, it was not a disturbance of the general laws of nature ; because, though such had not before been done, it was only because there was not the same occasion and combined circumstances to cause it to be done. This action of Deity was, therefore, not a gross violation of his own laws, but his acting upon those laws at a right time, place, and for a just and wise end.

But whilst I thus reason on Deistical principles, I may, I trust, be permitted to say, that a Christian's argument is still stronger ; for, if in the * language of Jesus, the principle of

* Matt. x. 28. " Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

The contrast is here evidently, between man, who can *only* murder the human body, but not murder the soul, (That the word signifies murder, slay, or kill, will appear evident by turning to Matthew xiv. 5. xxi. 36, 39, &c.) and the Deity, who could slay something of greater importance belonging to man. This same word is, in the Greek *psuran*, and its primary sense seems to be *psusis*, refrigeration ; and, according to Hesychius, signifies to breathe. It is used for *animal life*, Matt. vi. 25. x. 39. xx. 28.

life is not destroyed by death, there is no disturbance of the laws of nature by *calling that living principle into action*. Believers in the Scripture, and indeed in human history, &c. have multitudes of well-authenticated facts of such things in vegetation and diseases. With regard to lobsters shedding their claws, &c. they were adduced solely as evidences to prove, *that the living principle is not flesh and blood*, though it does not act without a medium; not to demonstrate the reality of the resurrection, but its possibility and probability.

But I am asked, "if it is impossible to examine and arrive at certainty concerning things that we really do know?" I answer, so far as we *know* any thing, of *that thing* we are *certain*, and so far *only*. But are we able to be certain of any thing we do not know? To use this gentleman's own illustration—The Catholic, who sees *the wafer and the wine*, does he know it to be flesh and blood? If he does, *he is certain of it*, but if he does not so *know it*, and yet believes it, his faith is only founded on his opinion; and opinion is always *uncertain*. It may be truth; it may be error—knowledge founded on adequate evidence can alone determine which.

On this subject, Mr. Editor, at present I have not more to advance, but turn with pain to the notice of your Christian correspondent. By it, I am given to understand, that my essay contains opinions not entertained by the Freethinking Christians. Prior to this information, I had, for many years, understood, that the bond of union among the Freethinking Christians, was an acknowledgment of the death, resurrection, and messiahship of Jesus, and an expectation of a future judgment by him—the fact and not the manner. If I understand this notice aright, I have been much mistaken, and *this Freethinking Church have not quite so much freedom of thought and liberty of discussion as they profess*. They, it appears, like other churches, are sticklers, not for facts, but for opinions; and their Shibboleth must not be examined. Though they have not

Mark x. 45. Thess. v. 23; and for the *mind and dispositions* in Matt. xii. 18. xxii. 37. Acts iv. 32. xiv. 2; and this being contrasted with *some unorganized body*, either animal or vegetable, Matt. vi. 25. x. 28. 1 Cor. xv. 37, it is evident, that if any meaning is annexed to the passage, it is, that the principle of animal life is not *necessarily* extinguished by death; but, that when it is so extinguished, it is by the power of God, as a punishment. Quere, is not this what the Revelator calls the *second death*, or death after the body? As for *Gehenna*, rendered *Hell*. I consider it as synonymous with the Hebrew *Shaul*, and that both mean *the grave, the craver, and hiding place*.

I cannot agree with Crito in his essay on the immortality of the soul, at page 28, vol. i. for if *Soma* signifies life, and *Psuean* signifies future life, the contrast in this place will be destroyed; and if *Gehenna* signifies complete destruction, the doctrine of destruction is established, I believe, contrary to the opinion of the writer, who, I think, expects the *restoration of all human beings*.

found it necessary to avow their creed, they have found it necessary to avow their unbelief, without defining their faith. Such avowal, if I have read aright past history, is the first step to persecution. I hope more will be said of this matter; and to shew, that if I have done evil, I desire not shelter from blame, I thus publicly announce myself the writer of these two condemned pieces, by subscribing myself, yours, &c.

Mile End, Dec. 8, 1811.

T. A. TEULON.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,

A VARIETY of circumstances having prevented the fulfilment of my promise respecting the 9th chapter of Romans till now. I hope the few thoughts submitted at this time, to the consideration of your readers, will obviate some of the difficulties in that chapter. To men of unprejudiced minds they may not be unacceptable, but by those who are wedded to a system, they may be accounted in the highest degree erroneous, especially by Calvinists, who are taught to believe the doctrines they have imbibed are proved irrefragably thereby, notwithstanding they are contrary to reason, and are a blasphemous libel against the author of all good. Should my conceptions of the Apostle's meaning prove just, however strong his language, the abettors of the doctrines of Calvin will be driven from one of their strongest holds, and be sadly put to it, to find any other part of the New Testament in their favour.

The doctrines generally deduced from this chapter, are the personal election of a few, and the reprobation of the rest of mankind; the absolute sovereignty of the decrees of God exercised in such a manner as to militate against his justice, thereby setting his attributes at variance, and rendering him an object of fear, instead of love, to the utter annihilation of that confidence which his creatures ought ever to place in him. This Apostle has generally been allowed to possess learning, and to be a close reasoner: but to understand him fully, the scope of his argument ought to be taken into consideration: yet his meaning cannot be known by selecting particular expressions or detached passages, as too generally has been the case, and which, as it appears to me, has been the chief support, though not the true source, of many of those erroneous opinions now maintained among the professors of Christianity.

Making then the drift of the Apostle's argument the basis of judgment, I think it will appear that he always keeps one leading object in view, namely the goodness of God in granting

man a revelation of his will, but chiefly the gospel revelation, which is the clearest manifestation of his character and the designs of his goodness, that can be afforded. He commences his epistle by shewing that every previous revelation had been disregarded, though intended for a general benefit: that the gospel was a further means of perfecting the plan of divine goodness, shadowed forth under former dispensations, and the fulfilment of the special promise made to Abraham, how regardless soever his posterity had been, or how averse soever men might generally be, to accept the offered mercy. He endeavours to prove that the darkness under which mankind were, was not from any lack of information respecting their duty to each other, or the knowledge of God's character, and their obligations to him, but because they did not like to retain the knowledge of him among them. That, however, under all the disadvantages arising from such folly, a view of his works in creation, and providence, fully proved his superintending care, and at the same time exhibited the most convincing proofs of his infinite wisdom, and almighty power. He also shews that the posterity of Abraham, with all the advantages they possessed, had acted an equally sottish part; yet in spite of all these seeming obstacles to the designs of his love, every thing was concurring to produce that which he ever had in view—the ultimate happiness of all his creatures. That such was Paul's view, may, I think, be fairly inferred; and by reverting to the forcible expressions used in the 19th, 20th, and 21st, verses of the preceding chapter, and the tenor of his reasoning in that under consideration, it will be more fully demonstrated.

This chapter commences with expressions of the most exquisite feelings for his kinsmen according to the flesh, which, if understood literally, would be impossible, were there such a thing as an eternal separation from blessedness. He seems aware that he might be misunderstood; and therefore, to guard against such a consequence he shews that the unbelief of the majority of the nation of the Jews, could not militate against the effect capable of being produced by the worthy few, through whom the divine plan was as certain of accomplishment, as though the whole nation had been obedient to the faith; and the examples he adduces prove, that there is an election, not indeed according to the view of the Calvinist, but agreeable to the statement thereof I presented to your readers in May and July last; but none of the examples exhibited in this chapter support in the smallest degree the doctrine of reprobation, as no relation whatever is had to the final state either of the righteous or wicked. However strong the expressions are respecting the love of Jacob or hatred of Esau, they have no reference whatever to the men themselves,

but to their posterity ; and it will be generally found, by examining the historic or prophetic parts of Scripture, that when their names are mentioned, it always is with reference to their posterity ; and the most certain way of coming at the Apostle's meaning, will be by referring to those very passages he quotes. Thus then, by turning to Gen. xxv. 23, we shall find, that the words, " It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger," refer to their issue, and not the men : so by referring to Malachi i. 2, it relates to the people. But I proceed to consider the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th verses, which are supposed to demonstrate, in the fullest manner, the absolute sovereignty of the decrees of God, as well as the appointment of every circumstance respecting the conduct of his creatures.

That God does act sovereignly in all his dispensations, cannot be denied, and that he has guarded against every contingent circumstance that might frustrate the designs of his love, must be certain ; especially, if we admit that he sees the end from the beginning ; but it does not follow, because he says " he will have mercy on whom he will," &c. that therefore his mercy is confined to a few of the human race—that the rest are consigned to everlasting misery, for then indeed how could there be righteousness with God ? Nor ought we to confine our ideas in a similar manner to what is said in the 16th verse—" So then it is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy ?" Both which passages must relate to those who receive the gospel, and by so doing become the leaven, that will leaven the whole lump, and do not relate in the smallest degree to a future state. By referring to Exod. xxxiii. 19, we shall find that these expressions were used when the *glory* or goodness of the Lord passed before Moses in the mount, and when his name was proclaimed ; and though Calvinists may think that the appointment of Pharaoh was for the only purpose of exhibiting the just wrath and indignation of God against obstinate opposers of his will, and a proof that his power cannot be withstood, this is by no means analogous to the Apostle's meaning ; for it is added, " that my name ought to be declared throughout *all* the earth." (Exod. ix. 16). Let us then refer to the passage itself, and we shall find that it was in relation to the deliverance of Israel, and in conformity to the promise to Abraham respecting that deliverance made in Gen. xv. 13, 14, to which I think the Apostle peculiarly refers, as the means of rendering happy all the families of the earth ; and it is not a little remarkable, what is noted by the historian (Exod. xii. 41), that the deliverance of Israel happened at the end of the 430 years from their going down into Egypt. Here however it is possible some may say this period does not agree with the account given in Gen. xv. 14, as 400 years are only mentioned. Let it, however, be recollected, that the latter

period refers to their being in a state of affliction, not habitation ; the former part of which being during Joseph's life may be supposed a time of tranquillity, which lasted, as the historian remarks (*Exod. i. 8*) till a new king rose up, who knew not Joseph.

Under this view of the faithfulness of God to his promise, we have a much better solution of the Apostle's meaning, than confining it to the raising up of Pharaoh, on purpose to exhibit the power of Jehovah, and of his punitive justice, which, however prominent they appear, and the effects of which, however sensibly felt by the same surrounding nations, cannot be considered as the means of making known the name of the Lord to all the earth, as at this time it could only be declared to a very small portion of the habitable globe ; but if we extend our view to the effects to be produced by this event—effects that are yet to be extended far and wide, we shall see with what reason it was said “ that his name might be declared throughout *all* the earth,” not as a vengeful and direful being, but as a God of infinite goodness and mercy; but which cannot be completely fulfilled until all the families of the earth are blessed in Abraham, by being united together under that king who shall reign in righteousness, and to whose sceptre every knee shall bow. But, it is added, “ therefore hath he mercy on whom he will ; and whom he will he hardeneth,” which possibly may refer to *Exod. vii. 13*.

As the magicians, by their juggling, performed some acts like Moses, it is possible Pharaoh was not convinced that Moses acted under the divine command ; but it is further said (*ix. 12*) that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh. This, though so positively expressed, may be applicable to their own act primarily, and is so denominated (*I Sam. vi. 6*); therefore may be considered rather permissively than decretively, agreeable to *Amos. iii. 6*, “ shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it ;” or judicially, for certain it is men may go on in a course of evil till their consciences become seared. Even those who have known the truth may become so lost to all feeling as not to be renewed again to repentance (*Heb. vi. 6*).

In the 19th and four following verses, he takes up the objector's argument by asserting the right of Jehovah to act in the manner he has done ; not however viewing his conduct in the contracted way of the Calvinist, but in shewing that even in the exercise of his sovereign power it is to promote the best interests of his creatures, and that all the distinctions he makes and every appointment he ordains, are subservient to that glorious end ; for it ought to be remembered, the Apostle confines his views entirely to the grand scheme of salvation made known by the gospel, not to the conduct of God in provi-

dence to his creatures generally : to which he has no reference, any farther than what may conduce to the promotion of their best interests and ultimate felicity.—That he exercises the greatest long-suffering to the hardened and impenitent must be admitted : and if the Apostle refers to God's dealing with Pharaoh, which is highly probable, he therein exhibits the fullest proof of his long-suffering goodness : for although his obstinacy brought much evil upon his people, it seems almost certain he personally suffered only partially, till he foolishly attempted to follow Israel through the Red Sea, for which he and his people were destroyed. The judgment, therefore, thus executed upon the kingdom of Egypt, stands as a monument of the divine power, and his punitive justice ; at the same time it strikingly exhibits the faithfulness of Jehovah to his promises, thereby affording encouragement to the weakest of his creatures to confide in him, and is a beacon to which all future ages may look.

Thus, Sir, have I attempted to solve some of the difficulties attending this chapter ; which, however defective, will not, I hope, be altogether useless. I remain, &c.

AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.

ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,

BY free discussion truth is obtained ; and as your Magazine is established on this principle, I expect as a favour from you, or from some of your correspondents, satisfactory answers to the following queries, which are the consequence of some scruples that have occupied my mind for several years respecting Christianity.

But, before I proceed, you must know that I have been brought up in the bosom of the church of England, and tutored into her rites and ceremonies, till I became of years to think for myself, and then I could not associate with her superstition, though I have not since formed any connection with any other religious society ; but still I feel the same love and pleasure for Christian principles, and for the simple mode of Christian worship.

In consequence of the bigotry and superstition of the church, I was led to think of the first establishment of Christianity. In this research, many scruples possessed my mind, and they have remained, ever since, unanswered to my satisfaction. In every number of your Magazine, from the first to the eleventh, I have anxiously looked for that solution which my scruples

require; but I am sorry to say, that hitherto not even Christophilus's arguments have solved them.

I am no advocate for Mr. Paine; but I think that Christophilus (in the tenth number) has not fairly answered him; for notwithstanding these books militated against the then corruptions of the church and her priests, they (the priests) could do no otherwise than adopt them, as they had been long before received by the churches; and as all churches contain some good men, and as all religions are endeavoured to be founded on the best moral principles, consequently the (then) priests could not declare against the general WILL of the churches; though these books were not congenial to the practices of the (then) priests. But Christophilus does not inform us when these books were written, or by whom; for which I have been anxiously waiting to know.

Now, Sir, by what we know of the founder of Christianity, he was the son of Joseph the carpenter (Matthew xiii. 55), and himself a carpenter (Mark vi. 3), till he was about thirty years of age, when he entered on his mission to preach the gospel; in which he continued for about three years, before he was put to death; but in that time he wrote nothing concerning his mission, nor of any of those things that are held so interesting to the world.

As the founder of Christianity wrote nothing respecting these things, to be handed down to posterity; and as there is not any official national records of them, either Jewish or Roman; nor any original manuscript of the books that we have, neither historical accounts of these books, till the second century, by what means are we to ascertain the truth of them?

All the historians of the church assert that the original manuscripts of these books were written in the Greek language; but we are naturally to conclude, from the situation of these men (evangelists) in life (poor fishermen on the sea of Gennesareth in Galilee, a northern province of Palestine), that they could not have the means of obtaining literary knowledge in those days, as printing was not known, and but few schools amongst the great and wealthy, and those confined to their own language: this is evident from Josephus, who relates that at the siege of Jerusalem, the leading men of the Jews were ignorant of the Greek language.

Therefore, if the evangelists did write, they must have written in their mother tongue (Hebrew); for it is very unlikely that poor fishermen's children were sent from Galilee to Greece, to learn the Greek tongue; besides, the Jews were too bigotted to their own customs and religion, to have any connection with an idolatrous nation. Hence, if the immediate disciples of Jesus wrote any of these books, what became of them, as history is entirely silent on the subject?

But I suspect that neither Jesus nor his disciples wrote any of them, but men in after time. If I am wrong, I wish that you or some of your correspondents may set me right, by informing me of the time when they were written, by whom, and in what language originally; and when they were collected into the form we have them now, and by whose authority. I shall expect a historical and rational answer to the above, for any other will maintain and prove all kinds of religion; but as I wish to worship God as a rational being, I likewise wish to be convinced as such, as my object is TRUTH, and to be in the love and fear of God.

I expected that these premises would have been established in your first numbers, before any inferences or conclusions were drawn; as all do not take them for granted.

By inserting these few lines in your valuable work, you will much oblige
Your's, &c.

Bristol, Nov. 26, 1811.

J. R—s.

For the Freethinking Christian's Magazine.

THE REFLECTOR.—No. VI.

THE man who writes for profit, is seldom tenacious of his own opinions; his principles must at all times be subservient to the caprice, the folly, or the prejudices of his patron. On the contrary, he who enters the field of literature or controversy, from disinterested motives, seldom writes in opposition to the dictates of his heart: he propagates his opinions without reserve, and believing them himself to be fundamentally true, cares but little for the criticisms of the learned, or the misrepresentations of the ignorant. Perhaps no writer, of any degree of respectability, has wholly escaped the censures of some who think themselves wiser than himself. No matter how perfect his system, or conclusive his reasoning, multitudes, though actuated by different motives, will strenuously oppose it. One will accuse him of ignorance, another of eccentricity, a third of folly, of error, of falsehood, or in fact of any thing. But will even these accusations united be competent to shake his opinions? Will his opponents, by such ineffectual methods as these, compel him to think like themselves? As well might they attempt to impart an invigorating ray of hope to the bosom long inured to despair, or speak comfort to the ill-fated mariner, whose frail bark, assailed by some tremendous whirlwind, appears elevated, shattered, and leaky, on the highest wave, and waiting only the destructive approach of another, to overwhelm it in the ocean's bottomless trough. The man alone who seeks by fair argument, established on the basis of

reason and experience, is likely to convince; but even he must prove a negation, before he pronounces his opponent fundamentally wrong. Controversies, generally speaking, are conducted with little candour, and with still less respectful or even decent language. It is but too common for scurrility, misrepresentation, and abuse, to supersede the exercise of argument; and writers indulge in personal invective, at a time when they ought to exhibit the greatest liberality.

The "Reflector" has been led into this apparent digression from his original plan, by the attack of "Saceto," in his "Advice to Young Men," contained in the eleventh number. A leisure hour or two shall be occupied in framing a reply. Had this attack been solely confined to the position laid down; that "*man was the slave of the passions*," the "Reflector" would have found it less difficult to understand it. As it is, "chisels," "philosophers," "statues," and "forked lightnings"—"Venus" and "Franklin"—"Apollo," "painting," and "sculpture"—appear so admirably jumbled together, that it might require a greater "*connoisseur*" than the "Reflector," judiciously to determine their respective places. It is, however, to be hoped, that he has penetrated through the veil of ambiguity in which it was obscured, and discovered something like the author's meaning. "Saceto" apologises for his "indirect" attack, and alleges want of leisure to be the reason that precluded a "distinct and separate reply." This now appears to be the very essence of consistency, as he has afterwards contrived to fill *five* pages, in attempting to reply, while little more than one poor solitary page is occupied by the subject implied in the title of his paper. This is an object too trivial to mention—but why attack the "Reflector" under a mask? Why attempt to refute the arguments of a writer, under pretence of giving "Advice to Young Men?" Saceto affirms that it "lays directly in the way of his subject;" but how he discovers that, I am at a loss to determine. Perhaps, though, after dabbling in painting, in sculpture, and metaphysics, he may also have studied the intricacy, and chicanery of the law, under the Attorney-general, and have thus acquired *his mode* of perception and reasoning. However he may hereafter explain this, the "Reflector" has noticed it only to remark, that it is an attack unworthy of one who professes *freethinking*. Issuing from the pen of a Freethinker, it ought to have exhibited in every respect that candour, that liberality, that characteristic openness, and unequivocal language, which distinguish the advocates of that system; in short, it would have added much to the respectability of "Saceto," if he had, in addition to the profession of freethinking, acquired a quality equally dignified and scarce—*free speaking*. Had he given free scope to argument, and dealt less profusely in

assertion, he would have received that tribute at all times due to candour ; but he has thrown down the gauntlet in a manner which he “conceives” the most proper ; and the “Reflector” accepts it with the most cordial and heartfelt satisfaction. Unbiassed by party, unswayed by prejudice, and unshackled by interest, he will clothe his defence in the armour of truth ; reason shall be his shield, and the contest shall be decided by the sword of argument.

The “Reflector” has attempted to prove, and his arguments stand even now uncontroverted, that *man is the slave of the passions* ; Saceto “conceives” it a “false position,” yet even he acknowledges “that men are in general carried away by their passions—that they are more influenced by their passions than they are by their reason.” Blessed consistency ! so what reason cannot controul, education can. He then adds, “but when we wish to ascertain to what degree of perfection human nature can attain, the question is not what *men have been*, or what *they are*, but what *they may be*.” The “Reflector” might enquire if he is not wandering from the subject ; but he will treat him with greater candour. If, therefore, according to his hypothesis, “the question is not what *men have been*, or *are now* ;” for what purpose has he assumed his tremendous pen, and hurled its utmost powers against the feeble talents of the “Reflector,” who had only affirmed, and who does not even now feel inclined to retract his opinion, unless proved erroneous, that “*men have been*, *are now*,” and it is most probable *ever will be*, the slaves of the passions, while existing on the surface of this terrestrial globe ?

Men ever “*have been*,” and “*are now*,” the slaves of the passions : yet “Saceto” takes a flying leap over this, and loses himself in an absurd conjecture of what they “*may be* ;” and yet modestly affirms, that he “intends not to indulge in theoretical speculations, unless they are bottomed in fact, and supported by experience.” Now I would ask Saceto, what was ever more “bottomed in fact and supported by experience,” than the position laid down, that *man is the slave of the passions* ? But he has “known the most stubborn spirits softened down by the mild influence of religion, and children the most virtuous and amiable, who have been made so purely by education.” The “Reflector,” for the sake of argument, will grant him this position ; but did he, in any of the former numbers, inculcate any sentiments concerning the passions of “*children* ?” Most certainly not. Are “*virtuous and amiable children*” then, the most powerful champions he can produce to prove the human passions imbecile or subservient to *education* ? The passions of “*children*,” from a variety of circumstances, have not room to expand ; and those distinguished for amiability at that period are the most prominent. Children, while in a state of

dependance, are not to be considered as implicated in such questions as these. The bright orb of happiness irradiates their morning of life, and the dawn of reason is seldom obscured by the lowering clouds which encircle those who have arrived at maturity.

“Saceto” adds, “could I *suppose* with this writer, that the passions exist independent of and uncontrouled by custom or education,” &c. But what are the *suppositions* of “Saceto” to the *arguments* of the “Reflector?” If he intended to oppose him, he ought to have been more explicit on his grounds for doing so; and previous to that he should have *refuted* the arguments by which that opinion was accompanied. “Saceto” asks the “Reflector,” for what purpose he has taken up his “prolific pen” to expose hypocrisy, lash folly, and censure vice, when he believes man to be the slave of the passions, which no education can controul, and which no declamation of his can destroy? Is vice, folly, or hypocrisy, to triumph with impunity? Is it to escape the honest lash of satire, on account of the causes by which it is produced? Let “Saceto” remember the words of an elegant satirist, that

“Vice is a monster of so foul a mien,
That to be hated, needs but to be seen.”

“Saceto” is fond of interrogation; and the “Reflector” might enquire, with equal propriety, if it is not folly to attempt reformation? If it is not folly to teach the doctrines of Christianity, when it has made such tardy progress during the period of near eighteen hundred years? If it is not madness to exhort men to virtue, who have so long been inured to vice? Or “*suppose*” the “Reflector” to be an inhabitant of a country in which despotism had been established—“*suppose*,” for instance, that the despot himself was dead, or mad, or otherwise incapacitated from ruling, and the reins of authority were transferred to another, perhaps a son who might be a fool, or to men who were alike unprincipled and corrupt, would not the opposition of the “Reflector” to their destructive measures, be entitled to praise, even though the improbability of its being attended with any beneficial effects, were ever so apparent?

In following “Saceto” through the maze of absurdity, we come to a most particular point; he asks, “*what is meant by man's being the slave of the passions?*” I have often (says he) heard the assertion made, without understanding it.” Now, honest Priscian, how hast thou entangled thyself in the ludicrous shackles of absurdity! Can any thing appear more truly ridiculous than a man who, after attempting, by an accumulation of weak, unmeaning, and vague assertions, to refute a position which he afterwards candidly acknowledges he

does not *understand*? He suspects, too, that the “writer is not unlike himself.” Contempt would restrain all farther comment; but liberality induces the “Reflector” to inform him, that he writes from conviction, and if he was so lamentably ignorant as he supposes him, he has at least a sufficient portion of sense to hide it from the world; and he must add, that if “Saceto” is so very dull of apprehension; it would be well if he possessed an equal share of prudence.

“Saceto” would wish it to appear, that he is a “*connoisseur*,” as such it might naturally be expected that he is intimately acquainted with the fine arts, that the *belles lettres* had been his constant study, and that the various branches of science had successively occupied his attention. Had he, however, acquired the rudiments of *logic*, he would have known that it is necessary to understand the fundamental principle of a position, before he attempts to refute the arguments by which it is supported. If he never discovered this, he is but ill adapted for a critic, and still less for a controversial writer. He asks of what passions *is* man the slave? I answer him in his own manner, of what passions *is not* man the slave?

Metaphysics appears next in rank. “All the passions (says he) are good except when indulged to an excess.” The works of creation, formed by the almighty architect of the universe, must undoubtedly all be good; but we should laugh at the man, who, while writhing in agony from a wound inflicted by some poisonous reptile, should pronounce it good, at a time when its venom diffused itself through his veins, and threatened dissolution. Now, says “Saceto,” it follows, by clear and positive deduction, *if I am right in my conjecture*, that man is not necessarily and essentially, the slave of the passions. So after all that “Saceto” has said; after cutting, maiming, hacking, and reviewing this position; he at last modestly concludes, that if he is *right* in his *conjecture*, it is *false* !!! What pitiful reasoning! How unworthy of a writer who is attacking the opinion of another; and more especially of one, who affects to think freely, and to take the most comprehensive view of things.

He enquires too, if “the passions exist separate and independent of the man?” Who ever affirmed that they did? was any thing advanced by the “Reflector” from which he could possibly draw such an inference? No, the passions do not “exist separate and independent of the man,” any more than man does of the passions; but they possess that boundless influence, that neither education, custom, or habit, can eradicate, or even effectually controul; and the history of the different species of the human race since the creation, will bear testimony to the truth of this.

In attacking the different systems of education, it was by no

means the intention of the "Reflector" to immortalize ignorance, as "Saceto" would wish to insinuate; and had he ever read attentively the former numbers of this paper, he would not have asked "will *he* presume to lay down the scale for moral and intellectual perfection?—Will *he* attempt to prescribe limits to the progressive powers of the mind?" The "Reflector" will—he has already done so—the standard he erected was perfectibility, and to that standard he still proudly points. Are the powers of mind, or virtue, to be examined by any standard adequate to this? He has accused the "Reflector" of "calling the history of mankind to plead his cause against a just system of education, on the minds and manners of society;" but where has he done this?—Is it recorded in the former numbers of this paper, or is it the puny offspring of "Saceto's" own prolific brain? He has accused the Reflector of weakness; the charge is too impotent to deserve animadversion; it is one which his "grey goose quill" will at all times repel. "Saceto" may perhaps observe some affinity between *that* and himself. Was it weak, "Saceto," while pleading the omnipotence of education, to point to the genius of Franklin or not? was he indebted for his distinguished rank in the annals of science to systematic education? The 'Reflector,' in asking if "all men were born alike," did not certainly expect that he could be misunderstood, or misrepresented. If all men were born alike, education would of course be the rudder and compass by which their actions would be directed. None but an *idiot* would suppose that he intended to deny that there was "a natural and necessary difference in man;" and he farther allows that genius is an inherent gift, and that pre-eminence of talent is seldom, if ever, the offspring of education.

Saceto says, "though we admit of such varieties in human nature, is the inference just, that education does not form the man? With as much propriety (says he) might we say that the creative power of the chisel, when guided by the masterly hand of the sculptor, does not form the statue, on account of the various kinds of stone, and other substances, of which statues are formed." Now, "Saceto" appears to have a very tender and commendable regard for propriety—he is a "philosopher," a man of science, and moreover a "*connoisseur*:" we might, therefore, expect from him much acuteness of reasoning, sound argument, and ingenuity: and truly, we have some specimens not to be equalled. Look, gentle reader, at the comparison between men and statues—flesh and blood to stone—animated bodies, with heavy dull inanimate matter. Let him attend to his philosophical reasoning:—Man is the substance, education the sculptor, and the various branches of science, the implements to be used in forming this statue. Now man, although his body is doubtless a substance, is already formed by

nature ; therefore, there can be no affinity between the body of man already formed, and a piece of unformed stone, of which the statue is to be made. If we apply it to the mind, as it might be supposed is meant, it will be necessary to enquire if “ Saceto ” is a materialist ? If he is, we are at issue—the “ Reflector ” is not. If “ Saceto ” himself is not, let him for once descend to argument, and prove that the substance used in forming a statue, possesses some *internal power* adequate to the mind of man. “ Saceto ” used this simile to show the “ fallacy of the Reflector’s reasoning : ” a laudable intention doubtless, but he remains unconvinced ; and in spite of his utmost endeavours to repress his risibility, he finds it gradually encreasing, while the lovely *Venus* and godlike *Apollo*, relaxing the solid muscles of their marble faces into a smile, proceed to grin audibly, and by intuitive sagacity, and internal impulse, at length her immortal *ladyship’s* titter, and his *godship’s* grinning, subsides in an harmonious *horse laugh*, while the “ Reflector,” infected by their immortal breath, shakes his sides, and completes the merry trio.

Such a *Venus* and *Apollo*, says “ Saceto,” are seldom seen—and seen to laugh, I presume, still more seldom ; but when their immortal faces can so far forget their dignity, as to “ smile ” at such inferior statues, it is rather dubious which will amuse them most—the “ Reflector’s ” *ignorance*, or “ Saceto’s ” *philosophy*.

Saceto “ *thinks* ” mankind “ happier than they were.” It is a difficult point to decide :—in the past, there is much to admire ; in the present there is much more to bewail. This paper has extended too far to argue the subject now, but it will be resumed at no distant period.

The sarcastic severity of “ Saceto,” on the style of the “ Reflector ” is, alike with his attack, illiberal. Was it worthy of a Freethinking Christian to select detached sentences, and not notice the train of argument which supported them ? Was it candour to misrepresent him ? And above all, was it just to criticise his style ? He has done this ambiguously—He compares the “ Reflector’s ” eloquence to the “ philosopher’s of Cyrene.” If he intended it as flattery, the “ Reflector ” would wish him to understand that he possesses a mind which revolts from it with disdain. Flattery ought never to be permitted, out of the precincts of a court ; that noxious weed is fostered best by the pestilential breath of power. And if he intended it as a personal insult, he has only to add, that it is beneath the dignity of a public writer, when combating general opinions, to descend to individual reflection.

The “ Reflector ” has already written more than he intended, but he trusts not more than the unprejudiced part of his readers will think necessary. Should “ Saceto ” attack his opinions

again, let him endeavour first to *understand them* ; should he pursue a similar method, it will be treated as this deserved—with silent contempt.

If the “Reflector” has been hurried by the warmth of his own feelings, into intemperate language, let it be remembered that “Saceto” first gave the provocation, by contemptuous insinuations, and illiberal invectives ; and has thereby drawn upon himself the castigation he now receives. Had the opinions of the “Reflector” been attacked by arguments, he would have supported them ; as it is, such support is unnecessary, and he bids “Saceto” adieu, and offers him a word of “advice” from the ingenious Swift—LEARN NOT TO CENSURE SUPERFICIALLY !

ST. PAUL CHARGED WITH PROSCRIBING HUMAN REASON.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,

A Correspondent of your's, who signs himself “Paulensis,” (vol. i. p. 325) has honored me with very particular notice, and called on me to disprove the truth of what he firmly, and, I will say, obstinately believes ; and a more determined believer in Christianity I hardly ever met with among those who pretend to have examined its evidences, for he sets up his reason as the standard of all reason, without considering the difference between the reasons which may induce him or any other man to believe in any particular system, and the general reason of mankind—that standard which all men in all ages have with little variation agreed upon, as the criterion of right and wrong, just and unjust, true and false.

To prove that I am not mistaken in accusing him of having confounded two things essentially distinct, I will quote a few of his expressions. “In the exercise and improvement of our reason we are as different as in the features of our faces, and the extent of our estates. How different, for example, is reason in Paul and Mr. Burdon ; quite as different as it is in Mr. Burdon and his servants. They probably have very different ideas of honesty, equity, generosity, and patriotism, from those of their master ; yet, in *their own eyes*, they are as rational as he is in his own opinion. Reason is a word which may be quite as much abused as faith ; indeed, what is faith but an enlargement of our reason—what but divine discoveries communicated to reason ?”

Though the improvement and exercise of reason may be different in different men, it does not follow that reason itself is different ; for if reason, or that faculty by which we judge of the approximation of different things to the same standard,

is not the same in all men; there can be no such thing as general principles of reason, but every man's opinion may be different, and yet all may be right; but the same Being who created us with persons generally similar, though differing in particular conformation, gave us faculties to judge of all sensible and moral objects generally similar, though from the incomplete or faulty exercise of these faculties we see the same objects in different lights. Though my servants, probably from a difference of education, may not have the same strong and confirmed ideas of rectitude and propriety, which, without vanity, I myself possess, they cannot altogether mistake right for wrong, hot for cold, or bitter for sweet; and if they even were, under these false impressions, to boast of their rationality, they would not find their ideas confirmed either by the sentiments of others, or the determinations of the law.

That faith is only an enlargement of reason, is an assertion thoroughly consonant to the doctrines of St. Paul, and such reasoners; but I believe it will be found in truth only as much so as the water is an enlargement of the land; it is in fact a totally different element. For a faith which does not arise from the deductions of reason, and is not consonant to the experience of the senses, is so far at enmity with reason as totally to set aside its most evident deductions. Such faith is not above reason, but contrary to it; in fact, there can be no faith above reason, for reason is the test of faith, and that which is not consonant to reason, is no proper object of faith. I speak not of any individual's reason or opinion, but the general principles of reason, which are, like those of justice, invariable, fixed, and immutable.

The gentleman says, I have given a good reason for not becoming a clergyman, but none for having neglected to expound the Scriptures, and awaken the pious and benevolent affections of my fellow-creatures. The fact is, that when I gave up the idea of becoming a minister of the church of England, I thought that in order to teach the doctrines of Christianity, it was requisite to be a minister of some other church; and therefore I never pretended to what I thought was not duly authorized, and in a few years after, I ceased to be a member of any church. But I trust I have not been altogether without attempting to awaken the "benevolent affections of my fellow creatures," though without preaching to them the doctrines of any sect or religion; and so far was my plentiful inheritance from rendering me indifferent, and abating the ardor of enquiry, that I have sought after truth with a degree of zeal and energy I believe not generally found in persons who possess this world's goods even in tolerable abundance; but my enquiries have terminated in a conviction different from that of Paulensis, and therefore he conceives that I have not arrived at the truth; and because I have ceased to be a

believer in the divine origin of Christianity, he very uncharitably doubts whether I have been faithful in any thing; for that is what is meant by the phrase of "faithful in all things."

The puritanical sentiments of Paulensis are sufficiently evident, when he joins with Paul in proscribing the heathen classics, because they do a world of mischief to our youth. I should be glad to know from whence our youth can derive more noble and exalted sentiments of morality, of patriotism, and of heroism, than in those very classics which the narrow spirit of sectarian bigotry proscribes as unfit for the instruction of our youth. If we are all to sink, as Christianity, literally understood, would sink us, into mere passive subjects of insult and oppression—if, when we are smitten on one cheek, we are to turn the other to receive the same affront—if, when a man takes from us our coat, we are to give him our cloak also—then indeed the spirit of the classics, which teaches us to resist oppression, to rise up against tyrants, to avenge not only our own, but our country's wrongs, is a spirit which ought not to be infused into our youth, lest it should tend to raise the hero on the ruins of the Christian; but if human nature will ever remain such as it is found in the writings of the classics, and not in the discourses of Jesus Christ, then I should recommend the study of the classics, in preference to the study of the New Testament, though some good and useful precepts may be found in it; for it is by no means to be adopted as a general system.

But, the gentleman says, "It is a groundless charge against Paul, that he proscribes the light of human learning." The whole tenor of the two first chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians, is to shew the superiority of the light of the spirit, to the light of reason; and as a proof of it I will quote the most material passages to that effect: that being established, it cannot be any longer denied that Paul proscribed the searching light of human reason.

Chap. i. 17. "Christ sent me to preach the gospel not with wisdom of words.—(19.) I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.—(20). Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?—(22). The Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified.—(27). God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty."—Chap. ii, 7. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.—(10.) God hath revealed these things unto us by the spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.—(11). The things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.—(13). Which things we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the holy ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.—(14.) But the rational man (or human reason) receiveth not the things of the spirit, neither can he know them, for they are

spiritually discerned.—(15). He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.—Chap. xii. 3. No man can say that Jesus is the lord, but by the holy ghost.”

Let any impartial man determine what all this means. Does it, or does it not, set up a kind of faculty, or power of judging the truth of divine revelation superior to the light of human reason? and what is this faculty? It is the faculty by which we received the revelation, *for spiritual things must be spiritually discerned*; and therefore to judge of revelation, we must judge it by itself, which is arguing in a circle. The thing revealed is revealed by the spirit, and we are to judge of it by the spirit, and not by our reason. Can any thing more effectually open a door for enthusiasm and infatuation? For if the power of reason is superseded in judging as to the evidence of revelation, any man may believe whatever he pleases to be a revelation.

My antagonist tells me, that St. Paul appeals to reason as often as myself, but *where* he has not told me; but if he does, it matters not, if he proscribes the use of reason in judging revelation. I have accused St. Paul of introducing ridiculous and irrational doctrines, and Paulensis dares me to prove it, and I will prove it.

The doctrine of election, or a particular calling by the special kindness of God, is expressly declared in the 11th of Romans, v. 7. “What then? Israel hath not obtained it, that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained and the rest were blinded.” Does this verse, or does it not, make God the author of iniquity? He is said to call or elect a certain portion of mankind, and to blind or reject the rest. Is this doctrine suitable to the great parent of all, or does it originate from the narrow selfish spirit of a mortal, anxious to obtain his protection, and exclude all others from a similar kindness? The Jews, who followed after righteousness, by the works of the law, are represented as not having attained that righteousness, and being rejected by God. It is true, they rejected the knowledge of Christ, they refused to admit the first principle of Christianity, which is thus stated by the apostle (Rom. x. 9.) “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” They refused to believe this, and therefore they were rejected by God; so that according to St. Paul, let their works be what they will, they cannot be saved, they are doomed to everlasting perdition.

This is the doctrine of St. Paul, but it is not the doctrine of reason, nor of nature, nor of common sense; for if there be a God, the father and creator of all mankind, he must regard them all with an equal eye of kindness, considering that whatever they are they are such by his special will and pleasure; and therefore he can no more punish a man for believing in one thing than he can for believing in another. He cannot, if he

knows all things, but know that men will think differently; therefore he cannot punish them for that which is the very first law of their nature.

St. Paul also confirms this doctrine, when he speaks of those who are in after times to fall off from Christianity; and he makes God the author both of their crime and their punishment.—2 Thess. ii. 11–13. “And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie; that they might all be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks for you to God, because from the beginning he hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.”—Ephes. i. 5. “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glory, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin.”

Is this enough, or is it not, to shew that Paul has introduced ridiculous and irrational doctrines of his own, in addition to those of Christ? Christ taught only, and that only in the Gospel of St. John, which I believe to have proceeded from the Alexandrian school, the belief in himself as the son of God, and his resurrection from the dead; to which Paul has added the doctrines of election, reprobation, predestination, and the works of the spirit.

The gentleman who signs himself Paulensis, tells me that the Gospel is a superstructure raised upon the laws of Moses. I suppose he means the moral law, because the ceremonial Christ himself especially abolished, though his two disciples Peter and Paul quarrelled about that subject, so that Paul boasts of having resisted openly his colleague. Considering therefore the laws of Moses and of Christ as one moral system, the writer dares me to mention one duty which is omitted; and to this I must answer that not a word is said of friendship, of patriotism, nor of those minor duties which are so fully described in the Proverbs of Solomon and the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach, which, together with the Wisdom of Solomon, contain a much fuller description of the various duties of life than is to be found in the Old and New Testament besides.

Paulensis considers the truth of revelation and the certainty of our existence, to be positively synonymous; that the one is no more to be disputed than the other: and therefore all that he leaves me to do is to betake myself immediately to the defence of Christianity, as if I had spent twenty years to no purpose in convincing myself to the contrary. I once believed in Christianity as firmly as Paulensis, and I believed pretty much upon the same grounds. I remain, &c.

Nov. 27, 1811,

Welbeck-street, Cavendish-square.

W. BURDON.

To the Editor of the Freethinking Christians' Magazine.

SIR,

IN consequence of a discovery made by an intimate friend of mine, of the plagiarism committed by your Correspondent, Frances Taylor, in signing her name at full length to a sonnet long since composed by me, and transmitted to the Poetical Magazine, and likewise to the Lady's Museum, I was induced to grant him my permission to request your insertion of his letter, signed Justus, in the publication wherein the above mentioned sonnet had surreptitiously made its appearance; and you, as Editor of the work, obligingly complied with that request.

I had hoped Miss Taylor would have explained the mistake (for such I had construed it on her part), and in that case, should certainly have insisted upon my friend's apologizing for the too great severity of his animadversion: judge then, Mr. Editor, how great must have been my astonishment and *contempt*, when on the perusal of her reply (contained in your last), instead of the justification of her *error*, I found she had basely and deliberately sat herself down (if indeed it could have been her), and ransacked the stores of ingenuity and artifice, to aid her in a *pitiful* and *disgraceful falsehood*! But, indeed, Mr. Editor, I scarcely believe a lady capable of such shameful duplicity, and think it would be more charitable to attribute the fabrication in your last, to the secret and *unhidden* interference of some one less friendly to truth, or too interested in obtaining the good graces of Miss Taylor to scruple even at a *lie* in defence of her veracity and reputation!

Would not the most ordinary capacity, Mr. Editor, marvel at the folly and impolicy of one, who, knowing himself not to be the author of a composition, not only sends it for insertion to two popular miscellanies, but, instead of retiring to his hiding place and *prudently* imitating the *silence* of Miss Taylor, ridiculously brings himself forward and brands the real author with the stigma of plagiarism? Common sense would scoff at such absurdity! But the sonnet, she says, has been composed these four years! Is it not singular it should have lain dormant such a length of time, and be now so recently snatched from its precious envelope, to be honoured by the notice of your pages.

I have long, Sir, been fascinated by the muse of poetry, and the above-named respectable repositories, together with the Gentleman's Magazine, General Chronicle, &c. can testify to such of your readers, who either have already consulted, or may hereafter consult them, whether the muse of Alphonso appeared indeed so poverty-struck as to become a *stealer of son-*

nets ! But who is this Miss Taylor ? What *original* poetry has she composed, and where to be found !

Before the *spear of Ithuriel* be again applied to *treachery and falsehood*, allow me, Sir, in this place to introduce my sonnet, after which I shall investigate the *luminous and incontrovertible truths* which that evil spirit, who counsels only to betray, hath breathed in her ear.

Eternity ! as from the rock of Time

I view thy *noiseless* waves majestic roll ;

What awful wonder, and what dread sublime,

Steal on the pensive silence* of my soul !

Yet while around, I gaze with mournful eyes,

By gloomy doubts, and anxious fears oppress,

Hope—like a seraph, bending from the skies,

Calms the rude terrors of my throbbing breast.

Oh ! when my soul directs her trembling flight

To the dark confines of thy boundless shore ;

When the wide world recedes before my sight,

And all its glitt'ring splendours charm no more,

In peaceful course may my frail vessel bound

O'er the dread billows of thy vast profound.

Here with the most unparalleled effrontery, Miss Taylor (or I would still believe, her valiant knight-errant) enters into the absurd and truly ridiculous detail of the manner in which, and the spot where, her muse caught its inspiration. It was, Sir, amid hanging cliffs, romantic woods, and foaming cataracts !—"A cascade rushing *impetuously* over huge fragments of rock, and *rapidly* descending into the sea, which that moment reflected the rays of the moon, gave rise to the ideas contained in that sonnet." What a sublime and beautiful depiction ! As, however, all is not gold that glitters, let us analyze it carefully, and see whether this rapturous bombast be not, as I shrewdly suspect it is, "full of sound and fury, meaning nothing." Indeed, there scarcely needs any comment, and Miss Taylor deserves my acknowledgment for having put more than the requisite weapons in my hands for refuting the flimsy arguments she has made use of. I shall not, however, like her, be content with bold unsubstantiated assertion, but proceed to investigation. The first and second lines of the sonnet, as they stood in the original copy, and as Miss Taylor has transplanted into her surreptitious one, run thus—

Eternity ! as from the rock of Time,

I view thy *noiseless* waves majestic roll.

Noiseless waves ! how likely to be suggested by thundering waterfalls ! Can a "cascade, *rushing impetuously* over huge fragments of rocks," and tumbling with deafening sound to

Miss Taylor has here substituted "stillness" for "silence."—ALFONSO.

the sea, convey to the mind a just conception of a vast, a noiseless, an interminable ocean? How can the moon, shedding its tranquil (*not tranquillizing*) beams on its surface, remind us, as in the seventh line, of Hope bending like a seraph from the skies, and restoring *security* to the *perturbed-bosom*? Does not the torrent dash and roar though lightened by its rays? Where then is the coincidence?

But I will not insult your understanding or that of your readers, Mr. Editor; nor will I longer demean myself by giving an air of consequence to a *lie*, engendered by meanness, and supported by impudence! Your readers are to judge for themselves—let their verdict be impartial! I have not, it is true, the privilege of appealing to the feelings of your correspondents; I am no “unlettered female” to urge that appeal, under apprehension that the flimsy texture of my arguments should be too easily seen through (unable to stand of their own force). In short, far from being intimidated by the seeming threat of sending her “gentleman” to confront me, and ratify her pretensions to my sonnet, I hereby solemnly engage myself to meet him or any other person at the office of the printer of this Magazine, or whatever place and time herself may appoint, for the purpose of personally receiving the *proof* she so confidently talks of possessing. I remain, &c.

ALPHONSO.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

BY A LADY.

THO' doom'd by Fate to leave the rustic cot,
Around whose porch the fragrant jasmine grew;
Indulgent Fancy pictures still the spot,
And Mem'ry paints again those scenes anew;

Where oft at eve, beside the glassy brook,
I've seen with anxious eye the minnows glide,
And try'd t'entice them with the baited hook,
Or watch'd their course along the bank's green side.

For sportive childhood, rear'd in Nature's lap,
A stranger *then* to envy or to care,
Let no reverse of fortune, or mishap,
Assail its breast or plant a sorrow there.

Too soon, alas! the friendly mist dispers'd,
Too soon, unveil'd, life's rugged path appears;
Too soon, the pleasing picture was revers'd,
And shew'd *that* life was but a vale of tears.

But tho' of fortune and of friends bereft,
Still gentle Hope, *thy* sweet assistance lend;
Tell me that heavenly consolation's left,
That God above will prove the orphan's friend.

M. W.